

[4 May, 2007]

RAJYA SABHA

Quantitative limit on procurement by MNCs and private traders

3233. SHRI MOTIUR RAHMAN:
SHRI KAMALAKHTAR:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether due to removal of all controls on foodgrains, multinational companies and private traders procured wheat, pulses, etc. from the market in excess of their requirement, leading to profiteering, hoarding and black-marketing of wheat; and

(b) whether there is any proposal to impose quantitative limits on procurement of wheat, pulses, etc. by multinational companies in the interest of consumers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) Under the existing policy for procurement all the foodgrains conforming to the prescribed specifications offered for sale at specified centers are bought by the public procurement agencies (Food Corporation of India and State agencies) at the Minimum Support Price (MSP). The farmers have the option to sell their produce to FCI/State Agencies at MSP or in the open market as is advantageous to them.

There is no ban on private players from procurement of wheat from the mandis during the current Rabi Marketing Season (RMS 2007-08). However, a notification titled "Wheat (Stock Declaration by Companies or Firms or Individuals) Order 2007 has been issued under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 on 1.3.2007. The order provides that any Company or Firm or individual who purchases wheat beyond 50,000 tonnes during 2007-08 shall furnish to the Central Government a return indicating the name/address of the company, quantity of wheat purchased and quantity of wheat held in stock.

Awareness about consumer rights

3234. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that there is no awareness about the consumer rights among those who are living in the rural and backward areas;

(b) if so, whether any awareness programme is being undertaken by Government for this purpose;

(c) if so, the details thereof and how long such programmes are undertaken; and

(d) the financial allocations made to carry out these programmes, State-wise, to achieve maximum results of bringing awareness about the rights of consumers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA):

(a) and (b) Department of Consumer Affairs being the nodal Department for consumer welfare and consumer protection has launched a multi-media campaign (electronic/print/outdoor) for creating consumer awareness in both urban rural and backward areas. A survey on consumer awareness campaign conducted by Indian Institute of Mass Communication in 12 States covering 144 villages has revealed that 62.56% of respondents (both urban and rural) are aware of the campaign.

(c) Multi-media campaign (electronic/print/outdoor) is an on going scheme. Details of programmes are given in Statement (See below)

(d) The following allocations have been made to States under "Scheme on Assistance to States/UTs to Create Awareness" during the year 2006-07:

Sl. No.	Name of States/UTs	No. of Distts Rs. 1.25 Lakhs Per District	Amount (Rs. in Lakhs)
1	2	3	4
1.	Andhra Pradesh	23	28.75
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	15	18.75
3.	Assam	23	28.75
4.	Bihar	37	46.25
5.	Chhattisgarh	16	20.00
6.	Delhi	9	11.25

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1	2	3	4
7.	Goa	2	2.50
8.	Gujarat	25	31.25
9.	Haryana	19	23.75
10.	Himachal Pradesh	12	15.00
11.	J&K	14	17.50
12.	Jharkhand	22	27.50
13.	Karnataka	27	33.75
14.	Kerala	14	17.50
15.	Madhya Pradesh	48	60.00
16.	Maharashtra	33	41.25
17.	Manipur	9	11.25
18.	Meghalaya	7	8.75
19.	Mizoram	8	10.00
20.	Nagaland	8	10.00
21.	Orissa	30	37.50
22.	Punjab	17	21.25
23.	Rajasthan	32	40.00
24.	Sikkim	4	5.00
25.	Tamilnadu	29	36.25
26.	Tripura	4	5.00
27.	Uttaranchal	13	16.25
28.	Uttar Pradesh	70	87.50
29.	West Bengal	19	23.75
30.	A&N Islands	2	2.50
31.	Chandigarh	1	1.25
32.	D&N Haveli	1	1.25
33.	Daman & Diu	2	2.50
34.	Lakshadweep	1	1.25
35.	Pondicherry	4	5.00
		600	750

In addition to above, on receipt of innovative proposals for further assistance from the States of Gujarat, West Bengal, Sikkim, Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Chandigarh Administration, an additional grant amounting to Rs. 2.50 crores was released during 2006-07 to undertake consumer awareness activities at grass-root level.

Statement

Details of Multi-media campaign regarding Consumer Rights

PUBLICITY ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN

Generating consumer awareness is the key for the success of consumer movement in the country. In order to ensure that the message of consumer protection reaches every citizen of the country, the Department has taken-up an intensive multi-media campaign in consumer awareness and redressal in the last two years. The campaign, *inter-alia*, has the following components:

1. Print Advertisements appearing regularly in National dailies/regional newspapers in local languages in accordance with the New Advertisement Policy of the DAVP.

2. Telecast of Video Spots on various consumer related issues such as Short Measurement of petrol, Consumer Grievance Redressal System, ISI and Hall Mark, MRP, through Doordarshan and Satellite channels such as Sony, Star Plus, Zee News, Star News Doordarshan National Net work, Kalyani, Krishi Darshan Kendras, Regional Channels, Sun Network, ETV Network, Zee TV Network, Discovery and Entertainment channels.

3. MEGHDOOT POSTCARDS which, in consultation with Department of Post are disseminating consumer awareness messages even in far-flung rural areas including North-East States.

4. Printed Literature conveying the salient features of Consumer Protection Act 1986, Consumer Resource kit as well pocket calendars and posters for distribution during various events such as Trade Fairs,

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Nukkad Nataks and also through the State Governments at grass root level.

5. Song & Drama: The Department in consultation with Song & Drama Division of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has organized 1900 programmes in all the States/UTs to create awareness at grass root level.

6. Special Scheme on assistance to State Government/UT to undertake consumer awareness activities has been launched in 2006. An amount of Rs. 10 crores was released to State Governments/UTs for undertaking various activities out of plan allocations.

7. Help Line: The Department has launched National Help Line through a Toll Free Number 1800-11-4000 which is being operated by Delhi University for counselling Consumers on grievance redressal.

8. CORE Centre: The Department has launched on 15-3-2005 "Consumer on Line Resources and Empowerment (CORE) Centre", which is a web based initiative on consumer advocacy and redressal of consumer grievances.

9. Nukkad Nataks: To spread the consumer movement among youth, the Department organized youth festival during November 2006, in which 12 Delhi colleges participated. Various consumer themes were adopted in these dramas such as misleading advertisement, spurious goods, expired medicines Maximum Retail Price, salient features of Consumer Protection Act 1986. The best 3 teams were given awards to encourage the youth to be associated with consumer related activities.

10. Use of Sports Events: In order to reach maximum number of consumers, the Department has telecast video spots containing consumer related information during popular sports events such as World Cup Soccer and cricket matches.

11. A special focus has been paid to the North-Eastern Region, particularly through musical events.